

DEPARTMENT OF FORESTRY AND FIRE PROTECTION

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California Building Standards Commission
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Update on SFM Code Development Activities

Code development of proposed regulations continues. The 14 occupancy-based workgroups continue to meet and fine-tune their proposed amendments. Since the last Building Standards Commission meeting an additional workgroup addressing Height and Area issues has been added. The workgroups are generally co-chaired by a building official and a fire official. Membership on the workgroups includes stakeholder industries representatives. The proposed regulatory amendments developed by the workgroups will ultimately all be reviewed by the Core Group and will be made available for stakeholder input during three stakeholder meetings. The Core Group is comprised by 14 representatives from sister State Agencies and stakeholder organizations having no economic interest in the California Building Code.

Aside from the continued development work being done by the workgroups, the Core Group has been meeting bi-weekly to address various coordination issues that arise and to monitor the workgroup progress. The Core Group meet for three days in early January to perform the first in-depth review of the latest efforts of the workgroups. During this meeting the group voted on the proposed amendments either to: Accept, Reject, or Return the amendment to the workgroup for further clarification/justification. The task was much more involved than what was anticipated. Although not all workgroup efforts were reviewed, an enormous amount of material was covered.

By the time of your meeting, the first of three stakeholder meetings will have occurred in Sacramento on January 20, 2006. Subsequent meetings are scheduled for February 22nd in Orange County and March 24th in San Jose. The purpose of these meetings is to secure stakeholder organizations input on the draft. At the September workgroup kick-off meetings, Chief Grijalva directed the workgroup leaders that consensus must be achieved before the proposals would be submitted to the State Building Standards Commission. Many of the SFM stakeholders actively participant on one or more of the workgroups, and their efforts are truly appreciated, however, the magnitude and importance attached to this effort requires that even more effort be made by the SFM to be assured that all stakeholder's have had opportunity to review the proposals and comment accordingly.

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As the deadline for our code development rapidly approaches, the State Fire Marshal is committing additional human resources to this task in order to comply with the timeframes established by the Building Standards Commission. Steve Hart, Retired Annuitant, has been assigned to assist in assembling the SFM adoption package. Steve brings back to the SFM many years of experience and a unique knowledge of fire extinguishing systems that is invaluable. A new Deputy State Fire Marshal is undergoing the final steps in the hiring process. This deputy will be assigned to the Code Development Unit full time. We remain hopeful the new Deputy will be onboard by the time of the January Building Standards Commission meeting. Protocol prevents naming the new Deputy at this time, however, he has code development experience and is very familiar with the Building Standards process.

In summary, code development at the State Fire Marshal's Office continues at a feverous pace. The consensus methodology used in previous code development efforts is again proving to produce clear and effective code proposals. The State Fire Marshal would like to thank those involved for their commitment to fire and life safety by rising to the challenge of helping shape the future codes and standards for our State and encourages you to become involved if you have not done so already.

Submitted by,
DANIEL NAJERA
SFM Regulations Coordinator